

TRIBUTE TO MARC REISNER

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the untimely passing of Marc Reisner, a leading environmental author who helped awaken the nation and this body to the urgent need to reform the way we thought about water policy.

Mr. Reisner's 1986 book, "Cadillac Desert," is not only one of the great pieces of environmental literature ever written, but a marvelous study of the political process. It is often said that in the American West, whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting. Mr. Reisner's account of the historic water battles that have rocked California over the past 100 years puts new meaning into that old truism.

Having spent much of the last quarter century working to bring federal water policy into the modern era, I salute Mr. Reisner for bringing these issues, and the urgency of adopting a new water ethic, before the public in a comprehensive and effective history. We continue the arduous and seemingly never-ending battle to modernize water policy, and much of what we have achieved, including the landmark Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992, has profited by the understanding of water policy and water politics promoted by Mr. Reisner and "Cadillac Desert."

I want to express my condolences to his family, including his wife Lawrie Mott who is a scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council, and their two daughters. While his passing is a devastating loss and unacceptingly premature, I hope they can find comfort in knowing that his work helped change this nation for the better, and will continue to influence policymakers and private citizens for many years to come.

I submit for the RECORD at this point a story from the San Francisco Chronicle on Marc Reisner.

The article follows:

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, July 24, 2000]

MARC REISNER, LECTURER, AUTHOR OF
"CADILLAC DESERT"
(By Glen Martin)

Marc Reisner, a writer and conservationist who wrote the seminal text on the West's perennial water wars, died Friday of cancer at his Marin County home. He was 51.

Mr. Reisner wrote and lectured extensively on environmental issues, but he was best known for his 1986 book, "Cadillac Desert," an angry indictment of water depletion in the American West.

The book was a wake-up call about destructive dam-building, pork barrel water subsidies, and the general frittering away of the West's scarce water resources.

It stimulated a campaign for water policy reform that continues to the present.

Mr. Reisner was born in St. Paul, Minn., and was a 1970 graduate of Earlham College in Indiana. From 1972 to 1979, he was a staff writer and communications director for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

He was awarded an Alicia Patterson Journalism Fellowship in 1979, and began the research on water policy that ultimately resulted in "Cadillac Desert."

Mr. Reisner's book was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1986. The book was the basis for a \$2.8 million documentary film series, which was first shown on national Public Broadcasting stations in 1997. The film won a Columbia University/Peabody Award.

"Cadillac Desert" was ranked by the Modern Library as 61st among the 100 most notable nonfiction English language works published in the 20th century.

Mr. Reisner was also the author of "Game Wars," a 1991 book that elucidated the career of Dave Hall, a now retired special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who specialized in busting international poaching rings.

With author Sarah Bates, he co-wrote "Overtapped Oasis" in 1989, an examination of Western water policy. During the course of his career, his elegantly written essays and articles appeared in dozens of magazines and newspapers.

At the time of his death, Mr. Reisner was working on a book about the role natural disasters have played in shaping California history and politics.

In recent years, Mr. Reisner devoted much of his time to promoting solutions to California's environmental problems.

He was a consultant to the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations on removing antiquated dams that were interfering with anadromous fish runs.

He also co-founded the Ricelands Habitat partnership, a coalition of farmers and conservationists that worked to promote environmentally friendly agriculture, improve waterfowl habitat on cropland and minimize the negative impact on fisheries caused by water diversions.

Mr. Reisner was also involved in two private "green" ventures.

He managed the Vidler Water Co., which promoted environmentally benign ground-water storage and water transfer programs as an alternative to dams. And he worked with a group of California rice farmers and engineers to make fiberboard and other products from compressed rice straw.

Recently, Mr. Reisner served as a distinguished visiting professor at the University of California at Davis, lecturing on the interaction of human civilization and the environment.

He was a member of the board of the Natural Heritage Institute, an honorary trustee of the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust, a Rene Dubos Fellow and a recipient of the Bay Institute's Bay Education Award. He also received a special commendation from the American Whitewater Affiliation for his efforts to promote river conservation.

Earlier this year, Mr. Reisner was awarded a Pew Fellowship in marine conservation. He intended to use the funds to restore native salmon habitats in California.

Environmentalists remember Mr. Reisner as someone who was determined to mitigate the environmental problems he covered in his writing.

"Before 'Cadillac Desert,' the general public perception was that dams and water manipulation were an unmitigated good thing," said Michael Sherwood, a staff attorney for the Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund who is involved in litigation on endangered salmon and steelhead runs.

"Marc was instrumental in raising awareness of the damage being done to fish and wildlife," said Sherwood, "and in recent years, he showed ways environmentalists and irrigators could work together to find solutions that both protected natural re-

sources and allowed commercial uses for water. We can be thankful he was here to open our minds on both issues."

Mr. Reisner is survived by his wife, Lawrie Mott, a senior scientist for the Natural Resources Defense Council; and two daughters, Ruthie and Margot, all of Marin County. Memorial services are pending.

SUPPORTING THE OLDER
AMERICANS ACT**HON. DAN MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring your attention to an issue important to the American people, and especially to the people of my district in Florida. The Older Americans Act authorization expired in 1995, and we are on the cusp of reauthorizing this program and improving the services offered to our seniors.

This act provides important programs such as Meals-on-Wheels, in-home services for elderly Americans, and services for residents of long-term care facilities. I have personally helped deliver meals to homebound seniors with the Manatee County Meals on Wheels. I recognize the importance of programs like these to assist our older population, and I will not turn my back on America's seniors.

I continue to support the programs within this act, and believe that this Nation has a responsibility to care for our elderly population. However, last year, I was not supportive of H.R. 782, which would reauthorize the Older Americans Act because the funding did not accurately account for the concentration of seniors in States such as Arizona, California, Texas, and my home State of Florida. For example, under the present formula, Florida is slated to lose \$40 million over 5 years. The formula for allocation of funds relies on outdated census figures from 1987. We all know people are moving south. It makes no sense that we are providing services and dollars in the year 2000, based on where seniors lived 13 years ago. We need to focus on how we can best provide support to the elderly population, and that includes accurately assessing the needs of each State. As chairman of the Census Subcommittee, I know we are spending almost \$6 billion this year to provide accurate numbers. Why get these numbers if we are not using them?

Although the House version of the Older Americans Act has some flaws, a recent bipartisan agreement in the Senate reformulates the funds allotted to State based upon their senior population in 2000. I believe this is our chance to move forward with legislation and be more responsive to seniors in our country. I urge the House to move toward helping our seniors and to consider and pass the Older Americans Act as agreed upon in the Senate.